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Letter dated 14 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Government of the Republic of Rwanda on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, issued at Kigali on 14 March 2003.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Stanislas **Kamanzi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 14 March 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Statement on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, issued by the Government of Rwanda at Kigali on 14 March 2003

On 6 March 2003 Ugandan forces overran the town of Bunia and have since continued to reinforce, with heavy armaments, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers and heavy artillery, the whole of the Ituri region.

The Government of Rwanda is shocked by the silence and inaction of the international community, which in the past has strongly demanded, through various Security Council resolutions and other diplomatic channels, the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Government of Rwanda wishes to remind the international community that it is within this context and in line with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the 30 July 2002 Pretoria Agreement that it withdrew all its forces from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in spite of the persistent threat to its security.

It should be recalled that Rwanda has faced a security threat from the Democratic Republic of the Congo ever since a United Nations sanctioned "Operation Turquoise" organized safe passage for ex-FAR and Interahamwe into the then Zaire. Under the good care of various United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations, these genocidal forces began to reorganize, re-arm and launch attacks on Rwanda with the help of successive Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Today, in spite of those agreements and Rwanda's total withdrawal from the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo Government has continued to supply and support the ex-FAR and Interahamwe. This has enabled them (ex-FAR and Interahamwe) to occupy some of the defensive positions previously held by the Rwanda Defence Forces, bringing them closer to Rwanda's borders. Once again the international community is silent and inactive.

Presently a new and dangerous situation is developing in the eastern Congo, where the Government of Uganda, working with the Kinshasa Government, is deploying its troops together with the Forces armées congolaises (FAC) and ex-FAR/Interahamwe into areas of Beni, Butembo, Lubero and Kanyabayonga in North Kivu, thus threatening Rassemblement conglais pour la démocratie (RCD) positions. This poses a direct security threat to Rwanda.

When Rwanda undertook to withdraw its troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the understanding was that such a situation and threat to its security would not arise again. This threat is implicitly recognized by the international community, through their incessant appeals to Rwanda to refrain from any counter measures.

If the international community has found it acceptable for Uganda to return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for all the dubious reasons it has given, then it is legitimate that Rwanda should go in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to contain this new situation.

The United Nations must, therefore, demand and obtain the total and immediate withdrawal of Ugandan troops from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the return of Kabila forces to their original defensive positions.

Should the international community fail to reverse this development promptly and decisively, Rwanda would be compelled to assume its responsibility and take appropriate measures to protect its people.